

The Green Pea Pirates

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"Webster—Man's Man,"
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RE-ENTER MCGUFFEY.

Synopsis.—Captain Phineas P. Scraggs has grown up around the docks of San Francisco, and from a mere boy on a river steamer, risen to the ownership of the steamer Maggie. Since each annual inspection promised to be the last of the old weather-beaten vessel, Scraggs naturally has some difficulty in securing a crew. When the story opens, Adelbert P. Gibney, likable, but erratic, a man whom nobody but Scraggs would hire, is the skipper. Nella Halvorsen, a solemn Swede, constitutes the forecastle hands, and Bart McGuffey, a wastrel of the Gibney type, reigns in the engine room. With this motley crew and his ancient vessel, Captain Scraggs is engaged in freighting garden truck from Halfmoon bay to San Francisco. The inevitable happens; the Maggie goes ashore in a fog. A passing vessel hailing the wreck, Mr. Gibney gets word to a towing company in San Francisco that the ship ashore is the Yankee Prince, with promise of a rich salvage. Two tugs succeed in pulling the Maggie into deep water, and she slips her tow lines and gets away in the fog. Furious at the deception practiced on them, Captains Hicks and Flaherty, commanding the two tugboats, ascertain the identity of the "Yankee Prince" and, fearing ridicule should the facts become known along the waterfront, determine on personal vengeance. Their hostile visit to the Maggie results in Captain Scraggs promising to get a new boiler and make needed repairs to the steamer. Scraggs refuses to fulfill his promises and Gibney and McGuffey "strike." With marvelous luck, Scraggs ships a fresh crew. At the end of a few days of wild conviviality Gibney and McGuffey are stranded and seek their old positions on the Maggie. They are hostilely received, but remain. On their way to San Francisco they sight a derelict and Gibney and McGuffey swim to it. The derelict proves to be the Chesapeake, richly laden, its entire crew stricken with scurvy. Scraggs attempts to tow her in, but the Maggie is unequal to the task and Gibney and McGuffey, alone, sail the ship to San Francisco, their salvage money amounting to \$1,000 apiece. His crew having deserted him, Captain Scraggs induces them to return. At an "old horse" sale the three purchase two mysterious boxes which they believe to contain smuggled "Oriental goods." They find, instead, two dead Chinamen. Scraggs seeks to "double cross" his two associates, but Mr. Gibney outwits him and makes a satisfactory financial settlement with the Chinese company to whom the bodies have been consigned, leaving Scraggs out in the cold. Gibney resents McGuffey's action in lending money to Scraggs without consulting him, and after a terrific wordy combat the three separate. McGuffey becoming assistant engineer on an oil tanker, Gibney disappearing, and Scraggs, forced to lay up the Maggie, takes a subordinate position on a ferry steamer. Senor Lopez, Mexican revolutionist, makes Scraggs a generous offer for transportation of munitions to Lower California. Scraggs accepts, and the old Maggie is once more put into commission. Arriving at his destination, Scraggs finds his old companion, Mr. Gibney, is the conquiree. Time having softened animosities, the reunion is joyful. Gibney plans to steal the ammunition and convey it to revolutionists in Colombia. On the way they are attacked by a Mexican gunboat and a terrific combat ensues.

CHAPTER IX—Continued.

As the first muzzle burst raked the Mexican Captain Scraggs saw that most of the terrible blast of lead had gone too high. Nevertheless, it was effective, for to a man the crews of the one-pounders deserted their posts and tumbled below; seeing which the individual in command lost his nerve. He was satisfied now that the Infernal Maggie purposed ramming him; he had marveled that the filibuster should use shrapnel, after she had raged with shell (he did not know it was percussion shrapnel) and in sudden panic he decided that the Maggie, mortally wounded, purposed getting close enough to sink him with shell-fire if she failed to ram him; whereupon the yellow streak came through and he waved his arms frantically above his head in token of surrender.

"She's hauled down her rag," shrieked Scraggs. "Be merciful, Gib. There's men dyin' on that boat."

"Lay alongside that craft," Mr. Gibney shouted to the helmsman. The schooner had hove to and when the Maggie also hove to some thirty yards

to windward of her Mr. Gibney informed the Mexican, in atrocious Spanish well mixed with English, that if the latter so much as lifted his little finger he might expect to be sunk like a dog. "Down below, everybody but the helmsman, or I'll sweep your decks with another muzzle burst," he thundered.

The Mexican obeyed and Captain Scraggs went up in the pilot house and laid the terribly battered Maggie alongside the schooner. The instant she touched, Mr. Gibney sprang aboard, quickly followed by Captain Scraggs, who had relinquished the helm to his first mate.

Suddenly Captain Scraggs shouted, "Look, Gib, for the love of the Lord, look!" and pointed with his finger. At the head of the little iron-railed companion-way leading down into the engine room a man was standing. He had a monkey wrench in one hand and a greasy rag in the other.

Mr. Gibney turned and looked at the man.

"McGuffey, for a thousand!" he bellowed, and ran forward with outstretched hand. Captain Scraggs was at Gibney's heels, and between them they came very nearly dislocating Bartholomew McGuffey's arm.

"McGuffey, my dear boy," said Captain Scraggs. "Whatever are you a-join' on this heathen battleship?"

"Me!" ejaculated Mr. McGuffey, with his old-time deliberation. "Why, I'm the chief engineer of this craft. I had a good job, too, but I guess it's all off now, and the Mexican government'll fire me. Say, who chucked that buck-shot down into my engine room?"

"Admiral Gibney did it," said Scraggs. "The old Maggie's alongside and me and Gib's filibusters. Bear a hand, Mac, and help us clap the hatches on our prisoners."

"Thank God," said Mr. Gibney piously. "I didn't kill you. Come to look into the matter, I didn't kill anybody, though I see half a dozen Mexicans around decks more or less cut up. Where you been all these years, Mac?"

"I been chief engineer in the Mexican navy," replied McGuffey. "Have you captured us in the name of the United States or what?"

"We've captured you in the name of Adelbert P. Gibney," was the reply. "I been huntin' all my life for a ship of my own, and now I've got her. Lord, Mac, she's a beauty, ain't she? All hardwood finish, teak rail, well found, and just the ticket for the island trade. Well, well, well! I'm Captain Gibney at last."

"Where do I come in, Gib?" asked Captain Scraggs modestly.

"Well, seein' as the Maggie has two holes through her hull below the waterline, and is generally nicked to pieces, you might quit askin' questions and get back aboard and put the pumps on her. You're lucky if she don't sink on you before we get to Desancho bay. If she sinks, don't worry. I'll give you a job as my first mate, Mac, you're my engineer, but not at a fancy Mexican price. I'll pay you the union scale and not a blasted cent more or less. Is that fair?"

McGuffey said it was, and went below to tune up his engine. Mr. Gibney took the wheel of the gunboat, and sent Captain Scraggs back aboard the Maggie, and in a few minutes both vessels were bowling along toward Desancho bay. They were off the bay at midnight, and while with Mr. Gibney in command of the federal gunboat Captain Scraggs had nothing to fear, the rapid rise of water in the hold of the Maggie was sadly disconcerting. About daylight he made up his mind that she would sink within two hours, and without pausing to whine over his predicament, he promptly beached her. She drove far up the beach, and the slack water breaking around her scared stern, and when the tide ebbed she lay high and dry. And the rebel soldiers came trooping down from the Meganos rancho and falling upon her carcass like so many ants, quickly distributed her cargo amongst them, and disappeared.

Captain Scraggs sent his crew out aboard the captured gunboat to assist Mr. Gibney in rowing his prisoners ashore, and when finally he stood alone beside the wreck of the brave old Maggie, piled up at last in the port of missing ships, something snapped within his breast and the big tears rolled in quick succession down his sun-tanned cheeks. The old hulk looked peculiarly pathetic as she lay there, listed over on her beam ends. She had served him well, but she had finished her last voyage, and with some vague idea of saving her old bones from vandal hands, Captain Scraggs, sobbing audibly, scattered the contents of half a dozen cans of kerosene over her decks and in the cabin, lighted fires in three different sections of the wreck, and left her to the consuming flames. Half an hour later he stood on the battered decks of the gunboat beside Gibney and McGuffey and watched the dense clouds of smoke that heralded the passing of the Maggie.

"She was a good old hulk," said Mr. Gibney. "And now, as the special envoy of the Liberal army of Mexico, here's a draft on Los Angeles for five thousand bucks, Scraggsy, which constitutes the balance due you on

this here filibuster trip. Of course, I needn't remind you, Scraggsy, that you'd never have earned this money if it hadn't been for Adelbert P. Gibney workin' his imagination overtime. I've made you a chunk of money, and while I couldn't save your ship, I did save your life. As a reward for all this, I don't claim one cent of the money due you, as I could if I wanted to be rotten mean. I'm goin' to keep this fine little power schooner for my share of the loot. She's nicked up some, but that only bears evidence to what a bully good shot I am, and it won't take much to fix her up all ship-shape again. Usin' high bursts shrapnel ain't very destructive. All them bumps an' scratches can be planed down, but we'll have to do some mendin' on her canvas—I'll tell the world. She's called the Reina Maria, but I'm going to run her to Panama and change her name. She'll be known as Maggie II, out of respect for the old girl that's burnin' up there on the beach.

"Aw, shut up, Scraggsy, old hunk," said McGuffey consolingly. "You ain't got nothin' to cry about. You're a rich man. Look at me, I ain't a-bawlin' am I? And I don't get so much as a bean out of this mix-up, all on account of me bein' tied up with a lot of hounds that quits fightin' before they're half licked."

"That's so," said Captain Scraggs, wiping his eyes with his grimy fists. "I declare you're out in the cold, McGuffey, and it ain't right. Gib, my boy, us three has had some stirrin' times together and we've had our dif-



"She'll Be Known as Maggie II, Out of Respect for the Old Girl That's Burnin' Up There on the Beach."

ferences, but I ain't a-goin' to think of them past griefs. The sight o' you, single-handed, meetin' and annihilatin' the pride of the Mexican navy, catin' in th' moment o' despair, generous in victory and delicate as blazes to a fallen shipmate, goin' to work an' namin' your vessel after him that way, is somethin' that wipes away all sorrows and welds a friendship that's bound to endure till death us do part. If McGuffey'd been on our side, we know from past performances that he'd a fit like a tiger, wouldn't you, Mac?" (Here Mr. McGuffey coughed slightly, as much as to say that he would have fought like ten tigers had he only been given the opportunity.)

Captain Scraggs continued: "I should say that a fair valuation of this schooner as she stands is ten thousand dollars. That belongs to Gib. Now I'm willin' to chuck five thousand dollars into the deal, we'll form a close corporation and as a compliment to McGuffey, elect him chief engineer in his own ship and give him, say, a quarter interest in our layout, as a little testimonial to an old friend, tried and true."

"Scraggsy," said Mr. Gibney, "your fin. We've fought, but we'll let that go. We wipe the slate clean and start in all over again on the Maggie II, and I'm free to state, without fear of contradiction, that in the last embroglio you showed up like four aces and a king with the entire company standin' pat. Scraggsy, you're a hero, and what you propose proves that you're considerable of a singed cat—better'n you look. We'll go freebootin' down on the Gold coast. There's war, red war, breakin' loose down there, and we'll shy in our horseshoe with the strongest side and pry loose a fortune somewhere. I'm for a life of wild adventure, and now that we've got the ship and the funds and the crew, let's go to it. There's a deal of fine liquor in the wardrobe, and I suggest that we nominate Phineas Scraggs, late master of the battleship Maggie, now second in command of the Maggie II, to brew a kettle o' hot grog to celebrate our victory. Mac—Scraggsy—your fins. I'm proud of you both. Shake."

They shook and as Captain Gibney's eye wandered aloft, First Mate Scraggs and Chief Engineer McGuffey looked up also. From the mainmast of the Maggie II floated a long blue burgee, with white lettering on it, and as it whipped out into the breeze the old familiar name stood out against the noonday sun.

"Good old dishcloth!" murmured Mr. Gibney. "She never comes down."

"The Maggie forever!" shrieked Scraggs.

"Hoorny!" bellowed McGuffey. "An' now, Scraggsy, if you've got all the enthusiasm out of your blood, kick in with a hundred an' fifty dollars an' interest to date. An' don't tell me that note's outlawed, or I'll feed you to the fishes."

Captain Scraggs looked crestfallen, but produced the money.

CHAPTER X.

"Well, Scraggsy, old hunk, this is pleasant, ain't it?" said Mr. Gibney, and spat on the deck of the Maggie II. "Right-o," replied Captain Scraggs cheerily, "though when I was a young feller and first went to sea, it wasn't considered no pleasant to spit on a nice clean deck. You might cut that out, Gib. It's vulgar."

"Passin' over the fact, Scraggs, that you ain't got no call to jerk me up on sea city, more particular since I'm the master and managin' owner of this here schooner, I'm free to confess, Scraggsy, that your observation does you credit. I just did that to see if you was goin' to take as big an interest in the new Maggie as you did in the old Maggie, and the fact that you object to me expectoratin' on the deck proves to me that you're leavin' behind you all them bay sew tendencies of the green-pea trade. It leads me to believe that you'll rise to high rank and distinction in the Colombian navy. Your fin, Scraggsy. Expectoratin' on the decks is barred, and the Maggie II goes under navy discipline from now on. Am I right?"

"Right as a right whale," said Captain Scraggs. "And now that you've given that old mate of mine the course, and we've temporarily plugged up the holes in this here Mexican gunboat, and everything points to a safe and profitable voyage from now on, suppose you delegate me as a committee of one to brew a scuttle of grog, after which the syndicate holds a meetin' and lays out a course for its future conduct. There's a few questions of rank and privileges that ought to be settled once and for all, so there can't be no come-back."

"The point is well taken and it is so ordered," said Mr. Gibney, who had once held office in Harbor 15, Master and Pilots Association of America, and knew a fragment or two of parliamentary law. "Rustle up the grog, call McGuffey up out of the engine room, and we'll hold the meetin'."

Twenty minutes later Scraggs came on deck to announce the successful concoction of a kettle of whisky punch; whereupon the three adventurers went below and sat down at the cabin table for a conference.

"I move that Gib be appointed president of the syndicate," said Captain Scraggs.

"Second the motion," rumbled McGuffey.

"The motion's carried," said Mr. Gibney, and banged the table with his horny fist. "The meetin' will please come to order. The chair hereby appoints Phineas Scraggs secretary of the syndicate, to keep a record of this and all future meetin's of the board. I will now entertain propositions of any and all natures, and I invite the members of the board to knock the stopper out of their jaw tackle and go to it."

"I move," said Captain Scraggs, "that B. McGuffey, Esquire, be, and he is hereby appointed, chief engineer of the Maggie II at a salary not to exceed the wage schedule of the Marine Engineers' Association of the Pacific coast, and that he be voted a one-fourth interest in the vessel and all subsequent profits."

"Second the motion," said Mr. Gibney, "and not to hamper the business of the meetin', we'll just consider that motion carried unanimously."

B. McGuffey, Esquire, rose, bowed his thanks, and sat down again, apparently very much confused. It was evident that he had something to say, but was having difficulty framing his thoughts in parliamentary language.

"Heave away, Mac," said Mr. Gibney.

"Cast off your lines, McGuffey," chirped Scraggs.

Thus encouraged, McGuffey rose, bowed his thanks once more, moistened his larynx with a gulp of the punch, and spoke:

"Feller members and brothers of the syndicate: In the management of the deck department of this new craft of ours, my previous knowledge of the worthy president and the unworthy secretary leads me to believe that there's goin' to be trouble. A ship divided again herself must surely go on her beam ends. Now, Scraggsy here has been master so long that the juice of authority has sorter soaked into his marrow bones. For twenty years it's been 'Howdy do, Captain Scraggs,' 'Have a drink, Captain

Scraggs,' 'Captain Scraggs th's an' Captain Scraggs that.' I don't mean no offense, gentlemen, when I state that you can't teach an old dog new tricks. No man that's ever seen a master makes a good mate. On the other hand, I realize that Gib here has been a-panlin' and a-beyachin' all his life to get a ship of his own an' have folks call him 'Captain Gibney.' Now that he's gone an' done it, I say he's entitled to it. But the fact of the whole thing is, Gib's the natural leader of the expedition or whatever it's goin' to be, and he can't have his peace of mind wrecked and his plans disturbed a-chasin' sailors around the deck of the Maggie II. Gib is sorter what the feller calls the power behind the throne. He's too big a figger for the grade of captain. Therefore, I move you, gentlemen, that Adelbert P. Gibney be, and is hereby nominated and appointed to the grade of commodore, in full command and supervision of all of the property of the syndicate. And I also move that Phineas Scraggs be appointed chief navigatin' officer of this packet, to retain his title of captain, and to be obeyed and respected as such by every man aboard with the exception of me and Gib. The present mat'll do the navigatin' while Scraggsy's learnin' the deep-sea stuff."

"Second the motion," said Captain Scraggs briskly. "McGuffey, your argument does you a heap of credit. It's—it's—dog my cats, McGuffey, it's masterly. It shows a keen appreciation of an old skipper's feelin's, and if the move is agreeable to Gib, I'm willin' to hail him as commodore and fight to maintain his office. I—I dunno, Gib, what I'd do if I didn't have a mate to order around."

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Gibney, beaming, "the motion's carried unanimously, Captain—chief—your fins. Dook me, I'm honored by the handshake. Now, regarding that crew you brought down from San Francisco on the old Maggie, Scraggs, they're a likely lot and will come in handy if times is as lively in Colombia as I figger they will be when we arrive there. Captain Scraggs, you will have your mate pipe the crew to muster and ascertain their feelin's on the subject of takin' a chance with Commodore Gibney. If they object to goin' further, we'll land 'em in Panama an' pay 'em off as agreed. If they feel like followin' the Jolly Roger we'll give 'em the coast seaman's scale for a deep-water cruise and a five per cent bonus in case we turn a big trick."

Captain Scraggs went at once on deck. Ten minutes later he returned to report that the mate and the four seamen elected to stick by the ship.

"Bully boys," said the commodore "bully boys, I like that mate. He's a smart man and handles a gun well. While I should hesitate to take advantage of my prerogative as commodore to interfere with the normal workin's of the deck department, I trust that on this special occasion our esteemed navigatin' officer, Captain Scraggs, will not consider it beneath his dignity or an attack on his office if I suggest to him that he brew another kettle of grog for the crew."

"Second the motion," replied McGuffey.

"Carried," said Scraggs, and proceeded to heat some water.

"Anything further?" stated the president.

"How about uniforms?" This from Captain Scraggs.

"We'll leave that to Gib," suggested McGuffey. "He's been in the Colombian navy and he'll know just what to get us."

"Well, there's another thing that's got to be settled," continued Captain Scraggs. "If I'm to be navigatin' officer on the flagship of a furrin' fleet, strike me pink if I'll do more cookin' in the galley. It's degradin', I move that we engage some enterprisin' Oriental for that job."

"Carried," said Mr. Gibney. "Any further business?"

Once more McGuffey stood up. "Gentlemen and brothers of the syndicate," he began, "I'm satisfied that the buck-bitin', the scappin', the petty jealousies and general cussedness that characterized our lives on the old Maggie will not be duplicated on the Maggie II. Them vicious days is gone forever, I hope, an' from now on the motto of us three should be:

"All for one and one for all—United we stand, divided we fall."

This earnest little speech, which came straight from the honest McGuffey's heart, brought the tears to the commodore's eyes. Under the inspiration of McGuffey's unselfish words the glasses were refilled and all three pledged their friendship anew. As for Captain Scraggs, he was naturally of a cold and selfish disposition, and McGuffey's toast appealed more to his brain than to his heart. Had he known what was to happen to him in the days to come and what that simple little motto was to mean in his particular case, it is doubtful if he would have tossed off his liquor as gaily as he did.

The Maggie II sails for the South seas.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)